IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:
   DALE E. GULICK

Serial No.: 10/045,117

Filed: November 1, 2001

For: MICROCOMPUTER BRIDGE FOR
    REMOTE MANAGEABILITY

Examiner: C. KNOLL

Group Art Unit: 2112

Att'y Docket: 2000.051400

Customer No. 023720

APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

   Applicant hereby submits this Appeal Brief to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in response to the final Office Action dated December 7, 2005. A Notice of Appeal was filed on March 7, 2006 and so this Appeal Brief is believed to be timely filed.

   It is believed that a fee of $500.00 is due. A check is enclosed. However, should the check be inadvertently omitted, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct the fee for filing this Appeal Brief ($500) from Williams, Morgan & Amerson, P.C.'s Deposit 50-0786/2000.051400.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The present application is owned by Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. The assignment of the present application to Advanced Micro Devices, Inc., is recorded at Reel 12501, Frame 0717.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Applicant is not aware of any related appeals and/or interferences that might affect the outcome of this proceeding.

III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-29 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-6, 12-16, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Alert Standard Format (ASF) specification in view of Trieu (5,925,135). Claims 7-10, 17, and 19-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard computer architectural features as evidenced by Hobson (U.S. Patent No. 6,360,327). Claims 11 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard microcontroller usage as evidenced by Schwarz (U.S. Patent No. 4,910,732). Claims 22-23 and 26-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard architectural practices as evidenced by Trieu (5,925,135) and Cromer (U.S. Patent No. 6,282,642). Claims 25 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the ASF standard in view of Cromer. Applicants also note that the Examiner indicated that claims 24 and 28 include allowable subject matter but objected to these claims as allegedly depending upon a rejected base claim.

IV.   STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

There were no amendments after the final rejections.

V.   SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Independent claims 1 and 16 set forth a first bus interface logic for coupling to a first external bus and an Alert Standard Format management engine configured to receive Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first external bus. Independent claims 1 and 16 also set forth also set forth an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine when an interface card is determined to be coupled to the first external bus or a slave mode for the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine when the interface card is determined to be absent from the first external bus, wherein in the master mode, the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine is further configured to actively poll for the Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first external bus.

Independent claim 13 sets forth means for coupling to a first external bus, means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first external bus, and means for determining whether an interface card is coupled to the first external bus. Independent claim 13 also sets forth means for indicating a master mode for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data when the interface card is determined to be coupled to the first external bus or a slave mode for the means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data when the interface card is determined to be absent from the first external bus, wherein in the master mode, the means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data are further configured to actively poll for the Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first external bus.

Independent claims 22 and 26 set forth detecting an Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system. Independent claims 22 and 26 also set forth operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system positively. Independent claims 22 and 26 further set forth operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system negatively.

Embodiments of the subject matter set forth in independent claims 1, 13, 16, 22, and 26 are shown in Figures 3, 6, and 7 and discussed in the related text. For example, the computer system 200A of Fig. 3A includes a processor 202, a north bridge 204, memory 206, Advanced Graphics Port (AGP) device 208, a PCI bus 210, a PCI connector 211, an ASF south bridge 212, a battery 213, an AT Attachment (ATA) interface 214, an SMBus 215, a USB interface 216, an LPC bus 218, an input/output controller chip (SuperI/O™) 220, extended BIOS memory 222, and, optionally, a crypto-processor 224 and protected storage 230. See Patent Application, page 7, ll. 4-8. Removable peripheral devices may be inserted into PCI "slots," shown in Fig. 3A as the PCI connector 211, that connect to the PCI bus 210 to couple to the computer system 200A. Alternatively, devices located on a motherboard may be directly connected to the PCI bus 210. See Patent Application, page 17, line 24 – page 18, line 4.

When there is no ASF NIC 109 in the computer system 200A, the ASF south bridge 212 recognizes that it must be a master ASF controller for the computer system 200A, during a power-up cycle. See Patent Application, page 19, ll. 5-8. In Fig. 3B, the computer system 200B differs from the computer system 200A in that the computer system 200B includes the ASF NIC 109 at the PCI connector 211. In the computer system 200B, the ASF south bridge 212

recognizes that it is an ASF slave to the ASF NIC 109. See Patent Application, page 19, ll. 16-19. An enable register 252 is configured to store a master bit that, when set, indicates that the ASF NIC 109 is not present. A slave bit may alternatively be stored that, when set, indicates that the ASF NIC 109 is present. See Patent Application, page 23, line 24 – page 24, line 1.

In slave mode, the ASF south bridge 212 responds to reads of internal sensor status by the ASF NIC 109, in block 505. The ASF south bridge 212 in slave mode responds to SMBus 215 polls originating on the ASF NIC 109, in block 510. The ASF south bridge 212 in slave mode also provides control points for the ASF NIC 109, allowing the ASF NIC 109 to reset the computer system 200 and cycle the power to the computer system 200. See Patent Application, page 26, ll. 1-5. In master mode, the ASF south bridge 212 actively polls external sensors coupled to the SMBus 215 at a programmable polling rate, in block 605. The ASF south bridge 212 in master mode actively polls or otherwise monitors internal sensor states, in block 610. See Patent Application, page 26, ll. 9-12.

VI.   GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Appellant respectfully requests that the Board review and overturn the five rejections present in this case. The following issues are presented on appeal in this case:

(A)   Whether claims 1-6, 12-16, and 21 are obvious over the Alert Standard Format (ASF) specification in view of Trieu;

(B)   Whether claims 7-10, 17, and 19-20 are obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard computer architectural features as evidenced by Hobson;

(C)   Whether claims 11 and 18 are obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard microcontroller usage as evidenced by Schwarz;

(D)   Whether claims 22-23 and 26-27 are obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard architectural practices as evidenced by Trieu and Cromer; and

(E)   Whether claims 25 and 29 are obvious over the ASF standard in view of Cromer.

VII. ARGUMENT

A.   Legal Standards

Inherency in anticipation requires that the asserted proposition *necessarily* flow from the disclosure. *In re Oelrich*, 212 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 323, 326 (C.C.P.A. 1981); *Levy*, 17 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) at 1463-64; *Skinner*, at 1789; *In re King*, 231 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 136, 138 (Fed. Cir. 1986). It is not enough that a reference could have, should have, or would have been used as the claimed invention. "The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient." *Oelrich*, at 326, quoting *Hansgirg v. Kemmer*, 40 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 665, 667 (C.C.P.A. 1939); *In re Rijckaert*, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1955, 1957 (Fed. Cir. 1993), quoting *Oelrich*, at 326; *see also Skinner*, at 1789. "Inherency... may not be established by probabilities or possibilities. The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient." *Ex parte Skinner*, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1788, 1789 (Bd. Pat. App. & Int. 1987), citing *In re Oelrich*, 666 F.2d 578, 581 (C.C.P.A. 1981).

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (CCPA 1974). Second, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. That is, there must be something in the prior art as a whole to suggest the desirability,

and thus the obviousness, of making the combination. *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Mfg. Co.*, 810 F.2d 1561 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In fact, the absence of a suggestion to combine is dispositive in an obviousness determination. *Gambro Lundia AB v. Baxter Healthcare Corp.*, 110 F.3d 1573 (Fed. Cir. 1997). The mere fact that the prior art can be combined or modified does not make the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination. *In re Mills*, 916 F.2d 680, 16 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990); M.P.E.P. § 2143.01. Third, there must be a reasonable expectation of success.

The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991); M.P.E.P. § 2142. A recent Federal Circuit case emphasizes that, in an obviousness situation, the prior art must disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, and that any motivation to combine or modify the prior art must be based upon a suggestion in the prior art. *In re Lee*, 61 U.S.P.Q.2d 143 (Fed. Cir. 2002). Conclusory statements regarding common knowledge and common sense are insufficient to support a finding of obviousness. *Id.* at 1434-35. Moreover, it is the claimed invention, <u>as a whole</u>, that must be considered for purposes of determining obviousness. A mere selection of various bits and pieces of the claimed invention from various sources of prior art does not render a claimed invention obvious, unless there is a suggestion or motivation in the prior art for the claimed invention, <u>when considered as a whole</u>.

B. **Claims 1-6, 12-16, and 21 are not obvious over the Alert Standard Format (ASF) specification in view of Trieu.**

As discussed in the background section of the specification, the ASF specification defines one approach to "system manageability" using a remote management server 90. The ASF Specification defines remote control and alerting interfaces capable of operating when an operating system of a client system, such as the computer system 100, is not functioning. See Patent Application, page 4, ll. 20-25 and Figures 1A-C. For example, an alert-sending device, acting as an SMBus master, may periodically poll a legacy sensor device. See ASF specification, page 63.

However, the ASF specification does not describe or suggest an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine when an interface card is coupled to the first external bus or a slave mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine when the interface card is absent from the first external bus, as set forth in independent claims 1, 13, and 16. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest all the limitations of the claimed invention.

The Examiner admitted that the ASF specification does not describe or suggest selecting master and/or slave modes based upon the presence and/or absence of an interface card. See Office Action, page 6. However, the Examiner alleged that this is an inherent feature of the SMBus as evidenced by Trieu. Applicant respectfully disagrees and notes that inherency requires that the asserted proposition *necessarily* flow from the disclosure. It is not enough that a reference could have, should have, or would have been used as in the claimed invention. Trieu describes a bus that may be coupled to one or more devices, which may have master and/or slave

capabilities. See Trieu, col. 1, line 65 – col. 2, line 9. However, Trieu is completely silent with regard to any techniques for selecting the master and/or slave modes of the devices. Accordingly, Trieu is completely silent with regard to selecting master and/or slave modes based upon the presence and/or absence of an interface card. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that selecting master and/or slave modes based upon the presence and/or absence of an interface card does not *necessarily* flow from the descriptions presented in the prior art of record.

In response to the above argument, the Examiner stated that the SMBus is inherently a multi-master bus and so the disposition of a unit on the SMBus is determined by the current master. If an interface card is a master, then the other complying units are slaves. The Examiner also stated that the claimed Alert Standard Format engine can only operate by asserting itself as master and can only assert itself as master when another unit on the SMBus is not asserting this privilege.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner misinterpreted the claims. As discussed above, claims 1, 13, and 16 set forth an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine when an interface card is determined to be coupled to the first external bus or a slave mode for the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine when the interface card is determined to be absent from the first external bus. Thus, the claimed Alert Standard Format management engine can operate in either master or slave mode. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the SMBus does not dictate whether or not the interface card or the Alert Standard Format management engine is a master or a slave. Applicant therefore maintains that selecting master and/or slave modes based upon the presence and/or absence of an interface card does not *necessarily* flow from the descriptions presented in the prior art of record.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case that the present invention is obvious over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner's rejections of claims 1-6, 12-16, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be <u>REVERSED</u>.

C.   <u>Claims 7-10, 17, and 19-20 are not obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard computer architectural features as evidenced by Hobson.</u>

Claims 7-10, 17, and 19-20 depend from independent claims 1 and 16. As discussed above, the ASF specification and Trieu fail to describe or suggest an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when an interface card is coupled to the first external bus</u> or a slave mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when the interface card is absent from the first external bus</u>, as set forth in independent claims 1, 13, and 16. Furthermore, as also discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that these features of the independent claims are not inherently taught by the prior art record.

The Examiner relied upon Hobson to describe a bus in a system with a bridge. However, Hobson does not remedy the fundamental deficiencies of the ASF specification and/or Trieu. In particular, Hobson does not describe or suggest an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when an interface card is coupled to the first external bus</u> or a slave mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when the interface card is absent from the first external bus</u>, as set forth in independent claims 1, 13, and 16.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case that the present invention is obvious over the prior art of

record. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner's rejections of claims 7-10, 17, and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be <u>REVERSED</u>.

D.   <u>Claims 11 and 18 are not obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard microcontroller usage as evidenced by Schwarz.</u>

Claims 11 and 18 depend from independent claims 1 and 16, respectively. As discussed above, the ASF specification and Trieu fail to describe or suggest an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when an interface card is coupled to the first external bus</u> or a slave mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when the interface card is absent from the first external bus,</u> as set forth in independent claims 1, 13, and 16.   Furthermore, as also discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that these features of the independent claims are not inherently taught by the prior art record.

The Examiner relied upon Schwarz to describe an 8051 controller. However, Schwarz fails to remedy the fundamental deficiencies of the ASF specification and/or Trieu. In particular, Schwarz does not describe or suggest an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when an interface card is coupled to the first external bus</u> or a slave mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine <u>when the interface card is absent from the first external bus,</u> as set forth in independent claims 1, 13, and 16.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case that the present invention is obvious over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner's rejections of claims 11 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be <u>REVERSED</u>.

E. **Claims 22-23 and 26-27 are not obvious over the ASF specification in view of alleged industry standard architectural practices as evidenced by Trieu and Cromer.**

As discussed in the background section of the specification, the ASF specification defines one approach to "system manageability" using a remote management server 90. The ASF Specification defines remote control and alerting interfaces capable of operating when an operating system of a client system, such as the computer system 100, is not functioning. See Patent Application, page 4, ll. 20-25 and Figures 1A-C. For example, an alert-sending device, acting as an SMBus master, may periodically poll a legacy sensor device. See ASF specification, page 63.

However, the ASF specification fails to teach or suggest operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system positively and operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system negatively, as set forth in independent claims 22 and 26.

The Examiner admitted that the ASF specification does not describe or suggest selecting master and/or slave modes based upon the presence and/or absence of an interface card. See Office Action, page 6. However, the Examiner alleged that this is an inherent feature of the SMBus as evidenced by Trieu. Applicants respectfully disagree and note that inherency requires that the asserted proposition *necessarily* flow from the disclosure. It is not enough that a reference could have, should have, or would have been used as in the claimed invention. Trieu describes a bus that may be coupled to one or more devices, which may have master and/or slave capabilities. See Trieu, col. 1, line 65 – col. 2, line 9. However, Trieu is completely silent with

regard to any techniques for selecting the master and/or slave modes of the devices. Accordingly, Trieu is completely silent with regard to selecting master and/or slave modes based upon the presence and/or absence of an interface card.

The Examiner relied upon Cromer to describe a computer architecture including a south bridge. However, Cromer fails to remedy the fundamental deficiencies of the ASF specification and/or Trieu. In particular, Cromer fails to teach or suggest operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system positively and operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system negatively, as set forth in independent claims 22 and 26.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case that the present invention is obvious over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner's rejections of claims 22-23 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be REVERSED.

F.   Claims 25 and 29 are not obvious over the ASF standard in view of Cromer.

Claims 25 and 29 depend from independent claims 22 and 26, respectively. As discussed above, the ASF specification fails to teach or suggest (either explicitly or inherently) operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system positively and operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the

Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system negatively, as set forth in independent claims 22 and 26.

The Examiner relied upon Cromer to describe a computer architecture including a south bridge. However, Cromer fails to remedy the fundamental deficiencies of the ASF specification and/or Trieu. In particular, Cromer fails to teach or suggest (either explicitly or inherently) operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system positively and operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system negatively, as set forth in independent claims 22 and 26.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case that the present invention is obvious over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner's rejections of claims 25 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be REVERSED.

VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

The claims that are the subject of the present appeal – claims 1-29 – are set forth in the attached "Claims Appendix."

IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

There is no separate Evidence Appendix for this appeal.

X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

There is no Related Proceedings Appendix for this appeal.

XI. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner erred in not allowing all claims pending in the present application, claims 1-29, over the prior art of record. The undersigned may be contacted at (713) 934-4052 with respect to any questions, comments or suggestions relating to this appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/17/06

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AGENT FOR APPLICANTS

CLAIMS APPENDIX

1.   (Previously Presented) An integrated circuit, comprising:

a first bus interface logic for coupling to a first external bus;

an Alert Standard Format management engine configured to receive Alert Standard Format

sensor data over the first external bus; and

an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the embedded Alert Standard Format

management engine when an interface card is determined to be coupled to the first

external bus or a slave mode for the embedded Alert Standard Format management

engine when the interface card is determined to be absent from the first external bus,

wherein in the master mode, the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine is

further configured to actively poll for the Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first

external bus.

2.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, further comprising:

a second bus interface logic for coupling to a first internal bus, wherein data from the first

external bus is routable by the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine

over the first internal bus.

3.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 2, further comprising:

an embedded Ethernet controller coupled to the first internal bus.

4.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 3, wherein the embedded Ethernet controller is configured to route the Alert Standard Format sensor data from the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine to an external management server.

5.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the indicator is stored in an enable register in the integrated circuit.

6.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 5, further comprising:

a power port configured to receive a reserve power signal, wherein the reserve power signal provides reserve power to the enable register.

7.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the integrated circuit comprises a bridge, wherein the bridge further includes:

a third bus interface logic for coupling to a second external bus.

8.   (Original) The bridge of claim 7, wherein the bridge comprises a south bridge, wherein the first external bus is configurable as a first input/output bus.

9.   (Original) The south bridge of claim 8, wherein the first input/output bus is an SMBus.

10.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine comprises a microcontroller.

11.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 10, wherein the microcontroller is further configured as an embedded 8051 microcontroller.

12.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the embedded Alert Standard Format management engine in slave mode is configured to respond to an external Alert Standard Format master.

13.   (Previously Presented) An integrated circuit, comprising:

means for coupling to a first external bus;

means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first external bus;

means for determining whether an interface card is coupled to the first external bus; and

means for indicating a master mode for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data when the interface card is determined to be coupled to the first external bus or a slave mode for the means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data when the interface card is determined to be absent from the first external bus, wherein in the master mode, the means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data are further configured to actively poll for the Alert Standard Format sensor data over the first external bus.

14.   (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 13, further comprising:

means for routing the Alert Standard Format sensor data from the means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data to an external management server.

15. (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 13, wherein the means for receiving Alert Standard Format sensor data is configured to respond to an external Alert Standard Format master while in the slave mode.

16. (Previously Presented) A client computer system, comprising:

a first bus;

a location for coupling to the first bus configured to receive an Alert Standard Format network interface card; and

an integrated circuit, comprising:

a first bus interface logic for coupling to the first bus;

an Alert Standard Format management engine for receiving ASF sensor data configured to receive ASF sensor data over the first bus; and

an indicator configured to indicate a master mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine when an interface card is coupled to the first external bus or a slave mode for the Alert Standard Format management engine when the interface card is absent from the first external bus, wherein in the master mode, the Alert Standard Format management engine is further configured to actively poll for the ASF sensor data over the first bus, while, the Alert Standard Format management engine is not further configured to actively poll for the ASF sensor data over the first bus in the slave mode.

17. (Original) The client computer system of claim 16, wherein the Alert Standard Format management engine comprises a microcontroller.

18.   (Original) The client computer system of claim 17, wherein the microcontroller includes an embedded 8051 microcontroller.

19.   (Original) The client computer system of claim 16, wherein the integrated circuit comprises a bridge, wherein the bridge further includes:

a third bus interface logic for coupling to a second external bus.

20.   (Original) The client computer system of claim 19, wherein the bridge comprises a south bridge, wherein the first external bus is configurable as a first input/output bus.

21.   (Original) The client computer system of claim 16, further comprising:

the Alert Standard Format network interface card installed at the location; and

wherein the indicator of the integrated circuit indicates the slave mode in response to the presence of the Alert Standard Format network interface card.

22.   (Original) A method for performing ASF alerting and control in a client computer system, the method comprising:

detecting an Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system;

operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system positively; and

operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system negatively.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising:

providing an indication of either the master mode or the slave mode for the Alert Standard Format south bridge in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in the master mode comprises the Alert Standard Format south bridge polling Alert Standard Format sensors in the client computer system for Alert Standard Format sensor status values and responding to requests from an external management server for the Alert Standard Format sensor status values.

25.   (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in the slave mode comprises responding to Alert Standard Format requests from the Alert Standard Format network interface card by the Alert Standard Format south bridge.

26.   (Original) A computer readable medium encoded with instructions that, when executed

        by a client computer system, performs a method for performing ASF alerting and control

        in a client computer system, the method comprising:

detecting an Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer

        system;

operating an Alert Standard Format south bridge in a slave mode in response to detecting the

        Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system

        positively; and

operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in a master mode in response to detecting the

        Alert Standard Format network interface card presence in the client computer system

        negatively.

27.   (Original) The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 26, the method further

        comprising:

providing an indication of either the master mode or the slave mode for the Alert Standard

        Format south bridge in response to detecting the Alert Standard Format network interface

        card presence in the client computer system.

28.   (Original) The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 26, wherein operating the

        Alert Standard Format south bridge in the master mode comprises the Alert Standard

        Format south bridge polling Alert Standard Format sensors in the client computer system

        for Alert Standard Format sensor status values and responding to requests from an

        external management server for the Alert Standard Format sensor status values.

29.   (Original) The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 26, wherein operating the Alert Standard Format south bridge in the slave mode comprises responding to Alert Standard Format requests from the Alert Standard Format network interface card by the Alert Standard Format south bridge.